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grees. Bull afterwards settled in Germany, and died at Lubeck, whence, curiously enough, sprung the greatest organist of the seventeenth century in Germany, Buxtehude, the model of John Sebastian Bach; a fact which renders it probable that the presence and example of the Englishman had not been without its influence.

The progress of music in England during the monastic ages, bears a favourable comparison with the rest of Europe. Bede tells us "that when Austin and the companions of his mission had their first audience of King Ethelbert, in the Isle of Thanet, they approached him in procession singing Litanies." But this was no new thing. St. Germanus had been heard to sing *Hallelujah* many years before the arrival of St. Austin. In 680, the Precentor of St. Peter's was sent over by Pope Agatho to instruct the monks of Weremouth in singing, and his reputation drew the masters of music from all the monasteries of the north to hear him. The earliest piece of secular counterpoint for voices is the Canon, in six parts, on the approach of Summer, of which the MS. is preserved in the British Museum. In 1430, minstrelsy appears to have taken precedence of chanting. Hearne relates, that at the annual festival of the Holy Cross at Abingdon, "twelve priests received only fourpence each for singing a dirge; and the same number of minstrels were each rewarded with two shillings and fourpence, besides diet and horse meat." But we may take a more picturesque illustration of the fact.

"In the year 1441, eight priests were hired from Coventry to assist in celebrating a yearly obit in the church of the neighbouring Priory of Maxtoke, as were six minstrels belonging to Lord Clinton, who lived in the adjoining castle of Maxtoke, to sing, harp, and play in the hall of the Monastery during the extraordinary refecton allowed to the monks on that anniversary. Two shillings were given to the priests, and four to the minstrels, and the latter supped with the sub-prior in the painted chamber, which was lighted with eight massy tapers of wax." At this early period traditional and individual skill had taken precedence of the science taught in the schools. The employment of minstrels at a funeral anniversary is suggestive. Many of these professors of the joyous science seem to have been classed among "the sturdy rogues and vagabonds" of the day; but the wildness and licence of the time must plead in mitigation of the judgment passed on our respectable musical ancestors.

To be continued.

ENGLISH OPERA.

A correspondent who writes to us on the subject of English Opera, *apropos* of the undertaking which is understood to be under consideration, and who wishes to have the law laid down touching the expediency of

all recitative being sung, to the exclusion of spoken dialogue—has opened a question which cannot be closed in a paragraph. He may be reminded that Italy is the only country where opera is exclusively carried on in music—whereas in Germany, France, England, where the languages are less mellifluous and the forms of conversation are less periphrastic, it has always been found difficult to arrange familiar parlance in a form which shall not sound ridiculous when sung:—and hence the comic operas of the three countries have mostly, if not always, been conducted in spoken dialogue. While our friend cites the custom of the *Académie Royale* of Paris, which includes Auber's lively 'Philtre,' he forgets that some of the finest French serious operas—as Grétry's 'Richard,' and Cherubini's 'Les Deux Journées' and 'Medée'—were produced with spoken text: also, that such is the usage throughout Germany with the operas of Mozart.—We are glad, however, to see that the question of the text for Music is beginning again to engage attention:—since we are satisfied that in proportion as it is neglected the chances of our having good and original opera-composers decrease. When we recollect that Dryden wrote for Purcell, that Milton, Gay, and Congreve, furnished the words to Handel, and that Addison disdained not to try his hand on an opera book,—when we recall the merry and pointed comic rhymes produced by Harry Carey for Lampe to set in his burlesque "Dragon of Wantley,"—when we indicate that Milton and Metastasio were treated by Arne,—or, to take a more modern instance, when we remind those who treat us as cavillers of the anxious and intelligent pains taken by Sheridan that his "Duenna" should be sensible not *nonsensible* as a drama (purposely limiting our illustrations to English examples) we cannot feel that our desires are Utopian or their execution without precedent in the story of our own stage.—*Athenæum*.

MUSIC, A MEANS OF POPULAR AMUSEMENT AND EDUCATION.

(Abridged from Sharpe's London Magazine.)

THE question we have to answer is this—*Can we contrive to make popular amusement a means of education and refinement?* Can such new, genuine, cheap amusements for the working classes be provided as shall have this desirable influence? The answer we supply by telling what has been done in one instance.

There is a market town on the borders of Norfolk and Suffolk, which once had mickle fame, for that a proud baron who had his castle there, from it hurled his defiance against "the king of Cokenaye;" and which of late years has had a better claim to renown as the source of some of the best and most accessible editions of the great classics of England. During this past summer there was assembled here, one evening, in a spacious and elegant room, once the theatre, and now, on market-days, the corn hall, a mixed but most cheerful company. It was the periodical festivity of a singing class, which has for some years been successfully carried on by a gentleman of the town. Beside the class, which numbers eighty members, there were nearly 200 visitors present, most of them working-people, servants, apprentices, &c.; but with a considerable proportion from the classes above them, tradespeople from the town, farmers and landowners from the surrounding country, clergymen, dissenting ministers, and their families.

Seated in groups, arranged with methodical irregularity, so that none should be below "the salt," in their best dresses, and in their best behaviour too, every one feeling

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as much at home as when at home, and yet brought into free and friendly intercourse with the classes that are separated from them in ordinary life by an impassable barrier of convention; a pleasanter sight than these working people presented cannot well be imagined.

An excellent and well supplied tea was served at half-past-five; and the comfort of the whole company was secured by the unassuming zeal of six attendants, each with two waiters under him, all volunteers, who made it their business to see that none were overlooked, and that order was everywhere observed. This concluded, the business of the evening commenced.

The character of the entertainment may be judged from the specimen of the bill of musical fare for the occasion. An overture of Mozart's, one of Bishop's, and another of Shield's;—for, in addition to the singing class, there are a dozen instrumental performers, and a piano, at which, with no mean skill, presides a lady whose whole family have long given their valuable aid in the class;—Novello's *Salve Regina*, with English words; Mendelssohn's duet and chorus, *To thee, O Lord*; the solo parts in this and in every case not being performed by the chorus singers of the class; Haydn's chorus from the "Seasons," *O be gracious*, with the preceding recitative and trio; *The heavens are telling*, from the "Creation;" Handel's, *Let me wander not unseen*; and, *Or let the merry bells ring round*, with its chorus; a glee and chorus accompanied, by Bishop; Purcell's anthem, *Sing unto the Lord*; and a six voice madrigal by Wilbye; the last two being, of course, unaccompanied. The style of the performance we cannot well characterize; for there is nothing but what would appear mere hyperbole that would be adequate.

At intervals, between the pieces, fruit, cake, and wine, were handed round with the same order that was observed during the tea; and the company then assumed the appearance of a fashionable *soirée*, being broken up into little parties, seated in social chat, or walking, about the well-lighted room, by way of varying the enjoyment of the hour.

The last piece had been sung, and the meeting had dispersed about half-past ten; and neither on this occasion nor on the numerous preceding ones, had the semblance of a violation of decorum cast a shadow upon the pleasure of the evening. Nor has one occurred after the close, when the same persons resumed their common social relations as masters and servants, and employers and employed. For the experiment has been repeated frequently enough to enable us to speak with confidence of all the details, and of all the results too, of a meeting such as this.

How it is that such an evening's entertainment should be worthy of being regarded as a means of educating, or rather of *cultivating*, the working classes, a very few words will show. All who know anything of the dwellings of the poor must know that *there* the civilities of life can never be so habitually practised, as to become part of their nature;—the very decencies cannot always be observed. And if the natural politeness of the poorer classes of central and southern Europe be appealed to against this remark, it is easy to show that very politeness confirms what we have said? for the open-air life of those people provides them with the very influence which our less genial climate and stay-at-home habits deprive our own poor of. And if even casual intercourse with persons of education and refinement makes itself evident in the manners of whole nations, some portion at least of such an advantage must follow from the putting of our work-people into circumstances in which they can occasionally feel themselves on the same level with the clergy, the gentry, and others of the grades above them, who form part of the company; especially when there are the holiday accompaniments of dress, &c. and the all-humanizing influence of music. Everything tends to produce what we are used

to call a "better understanding" of their relative position in society; that is, the feeling which can be expressed solely by the more intelligent, cheerful, unselfish, filling of their own places and discharge of their own duties. Besides which, in such a case, there is doubtless the instinctive assurance, that any impropriety in conduct at the time, or afterwards, would disqualify them from taking part again in such rational and unmingled enjoyment.

And now for the means by which this has been brought about and maintained.

Several years ago, the gentleman to whom we have referred—a keen lover of music, and acquainted with its science also—wishing to diffuse some of the knowledge that was so pleasurable to himself, or at least to preserve them from less innocent amusement, collected a few poor children into a class, and began to teach them part-singing. They learnt so rapidly and so well that the class increased continually, till, from the amusement of a leisure hour it has become an instrument of good, requiring no slight attention and skill to wield it well.

The sole cost is one penny per week for each member; and this trifling sum not only pays the hire of the fine room they meet in for one evening in every week, with gas and fire when needed, but also for an abundant tea once in each quarter.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

G. I. B. *The soprano voice is higher in compass than the alto voice. The words alto and contralto are indifferently used to describe the same pitch of voice; but like many of the terms used in music, much improvement would result from a more careful application of epithets—for example, we have heard it recommended to use the word alto to describe the male voice, and contralto the female voice of a similar pitch.*

A. G. *will find a private communication at our publisher's in answer to his questions, which have no public interest.*

E. C. L. *The two passages he encloses are performed exactly alike, the second being the modern method of writing a dotted note when the value extends beyond the bar.*

Correspondence.

To the Editor of the "Musical Times."

SIR,—As I know you are always glad to hear of and record the progress of the many societies for the practice of vocal music, which have been and are daily springing up in all parts of the country, I am induced to trouble you with the following report. In April, 1848, after a preliminary lecture by Mr. Hullah, at the Lecture Room, Hill street, Peckham, the first of a series of classes was formed under the auspices of Mr. W. Monk, one of Mr. H's. principal assistants. From this source sprung the Peckham Upper Singing School, whose first public performance took place at the St. George's Schools, Camberwell, on Tuesday, the 13th ult. Haydn's oratorio, *The Creation*, was selected for the occasion, the solo parts being most effectively sustained by Miss Stewart, Miss Gill, Messrs. W. H. Seguin and Benson. The chorus amounting, with the addition of some members of Mr. Hullah's First Upper School, to nearly 100 performers, "achieved their glorious work" with spirit and precision, and to the general satisfaction of a large and respectable audience.

The proceeds of the concert were stated to be in aid of the Hullah Testimonial Fund.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Nov. 19, 1849.

ALPHA.

To the Editor of the "Musical Times."

SIR,—Will you oblige me by stating in the next Number of your Work, whether a composition, with the signature